



Beaverton Police Department

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Chief Geoff Spalding



NEWS RELEASE

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Beaverton Police respond to train striking car

On June 28th at 10:40 am Beaverton Police were called to the report of a vehicle struck by a train near TV Hwy and SW 139th. Officers arrived and found a dark colored Honda CRV on its top just south of the tracks. There was one male occupant inside the upside down vehicle. The male was subsequently removed from the vehicle and treated at the scene before being transported by ambulance to a local hospital. It does not appear that the driver suffered any life threatening injuries.

The train tracks run parallel to TV Hwy on the south side. There is a commercial development that is south of TV Hwy just west of SW 139th. The commercial development is accessed by a driveway that runs south off of TV Hwy and crosses the RR tracks. There is a stop sign at the tracks but no RR Crossing Arms or lights. The RR tracks are approximately 20' south of the shoulder of TV Hwy.

Officers learned that the driver of the vehicle, later identified as 38 year old Denis Pittman, was observed by witnesses to be traveling west on TV Hwy (some witnesses originally reported the driver was travelling east on TV Hwy) when he turned left/south onto the driveway accessing the commercial development. As the driver approached the tracks at a slow speed the witnesses and conductor all observed the driver to be engaged in a cell phone conversation with his left hand up to the left side of his head. The witnesses and train conductor said it did not appear that the driver observed the approaching train as he was approaching the tracks. The witnesses reported that they attempted to wave to the driver to direct his attention to the approaching train and the conductor reported that he blew the train whistle in an attempt to catch the driver's attention. The driver continued past the stop sign and onto the tracks when the train struck the driver's side of the vehicle, flipping it over.

Pittman is being treated and is expected to be released soon. He is going to be cited for:

- **Failure to stop at a RR Signal:** 811.455
Bail: \$520 for enhanced penalty when accident is involved (normally \$260).
- **Operating motor vehicle while using mobile communication device:** 811.507
Bail: \$220 for enhanced penalty when accident is involved (normally \$110).

Train information; The freight train is a Portland & Western Train. The train is 1,150 feet long, was loaded with rocks, and weighs 25 thousand tons. There was no hazardous material on the train. The initial estimated speed of the train at the time of the accident according to the conductor was 25 MPH.